

# CATECHISM OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

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## THIRD PART

- I. The worship of saints and relics.
- II. The worship of the Most Holy Virgin : Immaculate Conception; Perpetual virginity; divine Maternity of Mary.
- III. The worship of images; pilgrimages.
- IV. A few particulars of external worship in the Catholic Church : incense, lamps, holy water; ceremonies in general.
- V. Purgatory.
- VI. Indulgences.

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And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul; so that even there were brought from his body to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them; and the wicked spirits went out of them.

Acts. XIX, 11-12.

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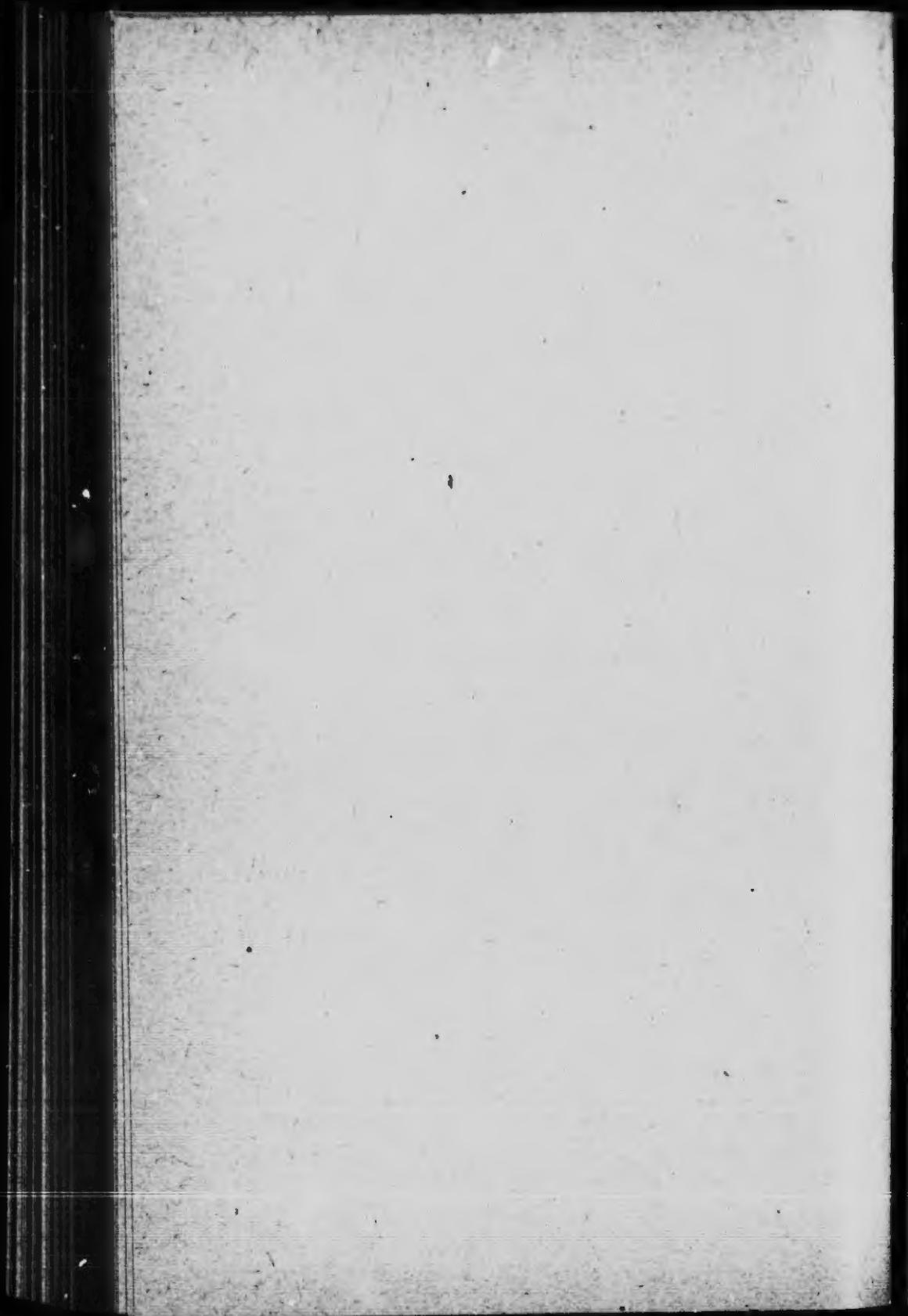
† L. N. Card. Bégin, archbp of Quebec.

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## FIRST CHAPTER(1)

### The worship of Saints and Relics

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#### SUMMARY

Nature of the worship due to God and to the Saints.—The Catholics adore God alone, they venerate the Saints.—The worship of Saints is founded on Holy Scripture and on Tradition.—The worship of relics is but a consequence of that of the Saints.—It is also demonstrated both by the Bible and the Tradition of the first ages.

**A**LL the numberless sects brought forth by Protestantism are rapidly evolving towards rationalism; and this is quite logical. Shaking off all authority, all restraint, they interpret the Holy Books as every one of them likes; they draw from the Scriptures discrepant and conflicting doctrines; they have even parceled out the Bible, lopping off now whole books, then passages that were troublesome to their fanciful innovations. Abandoned to themselves, giving way

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(1) The four first chapters of this booklet are but a summary of the work *Le Culte catholique* published at Quebec in 1875.

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to their prejudices and cravings for *profane novelties*, so called by Saint Paul, they are borne away by any wind of doctrine; they have renewed the prodigy of the confusion of tongues and they do not understand each other any longer: such is the natural outcome of a free examination, of proud reason substituted for the divine authority of the Church. No other unity is found among them but of enmity against the Roman Church and her dogmas.

Most of the Protestant denominations, Ritualists perhaps excepted, have constantly and violently attacked, among other revealed doctrines, that of the worship of the Saints, relics, images, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They hurl at us the reproach of idolatry and superstition. This old calumny has already been refuted a thousand times by Catholic apologists in the most victorious manner. Once more, let us sift out those silly accusations, in order to let truth shine again for the sake of honest souls.

The Protestants take the stand that the worship of the Saints, such as practiced in the Catholic Church, is a flat contradiction of the divine command, so often repeated in Holy Scripture: "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matth. IV, 10; Deut. VI, 13).

The answer to that objection implies the full understanding of what is worship and what the different kinds of worships are in the Church.

Worship is the honour paid to somebody on account of his excellency or perfection. (Saint Th. 1-2, q 2, a 2). If that excellency is considered in God, it is increased, infinite, and the worship thereof has received the special name of *latrīa* which means adoration; if it is considered in creatures, it is created, limited, and the worship thereof, is called *dulīa*, or veneration, in reference to all Saints, except the Virgin Mary; for in reference to the Blessed Mother of God, it is called *hyperdulīa*, or super-veneration, on account of the super-excellence of Mary who, in the order of grace, has received a perfection higher than that of all other creatures, either severally or collectively. *Hyperdulīa* means a veneration higher than that of *dulīa*.

The Protestants agree with the Catholics about the worship of *latrīa*, or adoration properly so called, due to God alone, because God alone possesses an infinite majesty, the essential and intrinsical perfection of which no created being is able to encompass the grandeur, and because toward Him we have relations of complete dependency which we are bound to acknowledge internally and to manifest externally.

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But Protestants are wrong when they accuse us of *latria* towards the Saints. Such is not the Catholic doctrine with respect to Saints. Here it is, such as drawn up by the Holy Council of Trent requiring all pastors to teach that "the Saints, now reigning together with Jesus-Christ, offer to God their prayers in behalf of men, that it is good and profitable to pray to them, to invoke them, to solicit their prayers, aid and assistance in order to obtain graces from God through Jesus-Christ, His Son, our only Redeemer and Saviour; that it is impious to pretend that Saints, admitted to the enjoyment of eternal bliss in heaven, must not be invoked; that they do not pray for men; that asking of them prayer for us in general or in particular is an act of idolatry; finally that supplications addressed by words of mouth or yearnings of the heart to those blessed inhabitants of heaven are a practice clashing with the word of God, and injurious to the honour of Jesus-Christ, or insane."

Do you find in all that any sign of adoration towards the saints? Not at all. Why, then, are the Protestants so intent, ever since the sixteenth century, on accusing Catholics of idolatry and superstition? Oh! it is because their hatred of the Church and their bad faith blind them

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and induce them to repeat that slander so well calculated to excite their ignorant hearers.

You must always keep in full view the infinite distance which separates the worship of *dulia* from the worship of *latria*. Between the sanctity of God and that of the most perfect creatures, between the divine excellence, in created, eternal, and that of man which is created and limited, there is a distance defying all human reckoning.

We beseech God to give us His graces, because He is the author and distributor therof; while we solicit the Saints to obtain for us from God, by their earnest entreaties, celestial benedictions.—God is the absolute master of all perfect gifts; the Saints are but powerful intercessors.—God has received of nobody the infinite excellence that is in Him; the Saints, on the contrary, are what they are only by the grace and through the merits of the Saviour Jesus; so that finally the honor accorded the Saints redounds to the glory of God, the fountain-head of their power, of their merits, of the perfection they have attained.—God alone is infinitely *adorable*; the Saints are only more or less *venerable*.—It is therefore evident that we keep thoroughly the divine command of adoring God alone: in fact, never has a Catholic bethought himself of rendering to the Saints the supreme honors of adoration.

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"But is not that worship of Angels and Saints a novelty ? Is it not an invention of the Roman Church in the ages of ignorance and superstition ?" —In no wise: for God Himself has ordained it, and the most holy personages of the Ancient Law have observed it. Let us open the Holy Scripture : what do we read ?

Abraham prostrates himself before the Angels who meet him.—After his struggle with an Angel, Jacob asks him for his blessing and does not let him go until the blessing is given.—Josue sees an Angel ; the Angel says : "I am the prince of the Host of the Lord"; Josue fell on his face to the ground, and worshipping said: "What says my Lord to his servant?" "Loose, saith he, thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy"; and Josue did as was commanded him. (Jos. V, 14-16).—Seeing the prodigies wrought by Eliseus, the sons of the prophets show forth their veneration by going to meet him, and they worshipped him falling to the ground." (IV Kings, II, 15).—In like manner, the Sunamite woman whose child had been restored to life by Eliseus, fell at his feet, and worshipped upon the ground. (Ibidem IV, 37).—So did a captain before Elias. (Ib. I, 13).

Would the Protestants be bold enough to accuse of idolatry these venerable personages ?

Would they say that they have trespassed against the divine command of adoring God alone ? We, Catholics, do not behave with Saints otherwise than did those patriarchs with Angels. We adore God alone; but we venerate Angels and Saints, for the excellency, the power, the dignity of which they are invested by God, and doing so, of course, does not detract from the supreme worship that all reasonable creatures owe to their God. Is it not written that God is admirable in His Saints, and that He asks to be glorified in them ? (II Thessal. I, 10).—Holy Scripture therefore acknowledges two different kinds of religious worship : one for God alone, and the other for the holy personages who have practised all virtues and, with the help of God, raised themselves to eminent perfection.

This Catholic doctrine is as ancient as Christianity. Indeed, when the Roman emperors treated with rigor the new religion and compelled our forefathers in the faith to take shelter in the darkness of the Catacombs, the Church raised altars upon the tombs of the holy martyrs. The first Christians were not shy, as our modern Protestants, in imploring the intercession of those of their brethren who had given up their lives for God; they engraved on their tombstones a prayer, an invocation, to the departed heroes

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of Christianity; and so, fifteen centuries in advance, they wrote the refutation of future Protestant error about the worship of Saints being a recent invention.

When the persecutions drew to an end in the fourth century, the world saw, in honor of Saints, the erection of splendid basilicas, as those of Jerusalem and Bethleem in the East, and at Rome, those of Saint Peter, of Saint Paul, of Saint Sabina, of Saint Mary Major, of Saint Balbina, of Saint Agnes outside the walls, of the four crowned martyrs, of Saint Chrysogon. During the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice, the names of those Saints were pronounced and invoked. The Holy Fathers tell us that, each year, the Holy Sacrifice was offered to celebrate the glorious entry of the Saints into heaven, to perpetuate the remembrance of their triumphs, to secure their powerful protection and induce Christians to be their imitators.

"We honor the servants of the Lord, Saint Jerome says, that this honor redound to the Lord."—Hear Saint Cyril of Alexandria: "We render very great honors to the Saints, because they have fought courageously for the truth."—Saint Augustine: "The Christian people honor the memory of the martyrs by religious celeb-

rations, to better imitate them and participate in their merits."

These Fathers, whose testimony has just been quoted, lived in the first ages of the Church. Hundreds of other authorities could be adduced, all upholding the same creed and recommending the worship of Saints. The Catholic Church, consequently, has made no innovation in this matter: the innovation is on the side of Protestants who have discarded this ancient doctrine.

**FIRST OBJECTION.**—"Catholics assume that the Saints in heaven can *hear our prayers and intercede for us*; but this nobody can prove."

**ANSWER.**—It is indubitable that God can communicate to his Elect the knowledge of our prayers, of our wishes, of our thoughts; the denial of this would be a blasphemy. If God has sometimes, even in this world, revealed to His servants what took place in their absence, as for instance to Eliseus the bargain between Giesi and Na'man (IV Kings, V, 26), to Saint Peter the fraud of Ananias and Saphira (Acts V, 3), with greater reason can He grant to His Elect in heaven a similar revelation. For the glorified souls are much more susceptible of piercing the veils of secrecy and darkness than those which are yet clothed with their earthly wrapping. And Saint Paul positively tells us

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that our knowledge shall be no longer imperfect as it is now, when we will see all things in the glory of heaven (I Cor. XIII, 9-10). Our Lord informs us that there shall be more joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. (Luke XV, 7).—He says moreover to us that the bad rich man spoke to Abraham from the pit of hell, and the Holy patriarch heard him, answered him, and told him that his fate was irrevocably fixed for ever. (Luke XVI, 24-26).

Holy Scripture proves likewise the *powerful intercession* of the Saints. You see it by Abimelech and the friends of Job who obtain the pardon of their sins through the prayers of Abraham and Job. (Gen. XX, 17; Job XLII, 8).—God Himself declares to Jeremias that Moses and Samuel, dead since a long time, could intercede with Him in behalf of the Jews. (Jerem. XV, 1-5).—Judas Machabeus, in a dream, sees the high-priest who was dead; he sees him absorbed in prayer for the holy city and his unfortunate nation. (II Mach. XV, 12-14).—The Apostle Saint John represents the Saints under the figure of twenty-four Ancients sitting before the throne of God and offering up to Him the prayers of the Saints of the earth. (Apoc. V, 8). See also (*ibidem* VIII, 4) the prayers of the Saints offered

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by the Ang.<sup>1</sup> with the censer.—In another place the same Apostle tells us of the souls of the martyrs, who know the sufferings of the Church, inquire about the end of the persecutions she is undergoing and are told the reason why the end is not yet near at hand. (Apoc. VI, 9-12).—All those passages of the Scripture prove evidently that the Saints heed our prayers and make them valuable with God in our behalf.

This doctrine is moreover admirably upheld by Tradition. It is borne out by all the Fathers of the Church. They teach us that all the Saints who have departed this life retain their charity towards those whom they have left behind, are solicitous about their salvation, help them by their mediation with God, join their prayers to ours, know those who are worthy of God's friendship. So, they are propitious towards us.

Such has been the faith of the primitive Church. Who have kept the ancient doctrine ? The Catholics. Who have innovated ? The Protestants. Even the Schismatics of the East agree with us about it, teaching that the honor bestowed on the Holy Virgin and the Saints does not detract in any wise from the glory which pertains to Jesus-Christ.

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But since the Saints pray and intercede for us, it follows therefrom that it is proper for us to invoke them, to ask their intercession and to hope that they will obtain for us the graces necessary to our salvation. Why, in fact, should it be amiss for those who are still fighting in the plain here below, to implore the protection of their predecessors who are now sheltered from the attacks of the enemy, near God, and enjoying a great credit in heaven? Nothing seems more consonant with right reason.

SECOND OBJECTION.—“The worship of Saints cannot be conciliated with Holy Scriptures wherein it is expressly said that there is *one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ.*” (I Tim. II, 5).

ANSWER.—Doubtless, Jesus-Christ is our only Mediator in that sense that He alone could redeem us by His infinite merits, deliver us from the bondage of hell, give value to our deeds and render agreeable to God the prayers that we pour out to Him either by ourselves or by His Saints.—But, let it be said again: it is not of the Saints, it is of God Himself that we ask for the bestowal of graces. We do not say to the Saints: “Grant us that favour”; we merely say: “For us from God obtain such and such a grace.” Is there anything injurious to Jesus-Christ in that invo-

cation ? By no means. A King is not offended by the fact that a poor peasant implores of him a favour through the intercession of a prince of his court; he does not see in such a step anything derogatory to his royal prerogatives. So it is with God. To Him alone we pay the supreme worship of adoration; we look on Him as the Author of all gifts either natural or supernatural: He remains ever free to bestow His graces when and on whom He likes; but we beg the Saints, who are His Elect, and are more agreeable to Him than we are, to intercede for us, in order to obtain for us the graces we want. These prayers which we address to the Saints are always founded upon the infinite merits of our only and supreme Mediator, Jesus-Christ, true God and true man.

If the Protestant doctrine were true, the consequence thereof should be that we should not solicit even for ourselves the prayers of a third person, according to every day practice. However Saint Paul himself, very often, recommends himself to the prayers of the faithful; and Saint Paul was not a Protestant! (See Rom. XV, 3 31; I Thess. V, 25; Ephes. VI, 18).

The same Apostle Saint Paul teaches "that all the virtues that have bloomed upon earth have been gathered in heaven and melted into one; Charity, Faith and Hope no longer subsist;

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they have given way to Love which is now as the essence of that blissful life. It is comforting to remember that the departed child continues in heaven to love the mother he left here below, and that the ties of friendship are not shattered with mortal existence. It is admirable to consider that charity, more ardent, must be also more powerful in heaven, and must urge more vividly our celestial friends who clealy see the numberless dangers and the violent temptations that beset us. Catholicism alone shows us those pure souls, those blessed spirits having all at once the will and the power to help us, and addressing to God fervent prayers for those they continue to love upon earth." (WISEMAN : *Conferences on doctrines*). (1).

"If you think fit that we recommend ourselves to the prayers of our *earthly* fellows, and improper that we do the same with our *heavenly* friends, it is exactly as though you said to a poor man: you may ask alms of the rich who have a revenue of a hundred dollars; but do not ask anything of those who have millions safely invested."—(So says Mgr. Gerbet.)

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(1) This quotation is not given in the exact words of the original.

THIRD OBJECTION.—"All worship is due to God alone; any worship rendered to the Saints is like a theft from God of an honor pertaining exclusively to Himself."

ANSWER.—It is quite true that the worship of *latrīa*—adoration properly so called—is due only to God; but it is a falsehood to pretend that the worship of *dulīa*—honor, veneration regarding the virtues, the supernatural excellence of a being—belongs to God alone. The whole difficulty arises from the confusion that the Protestants ever entertain between the two kinds of worship; they are loath to understand that the same word has sometimes different meanings. For instance, when the Catholics talk of the veneration of relics, or of the *adoration* of the Cross, not a single one means that the same supreme honors which pertain to God are rendered to relics and the Cross. In the same way, when the external act of worship is the same toward God and the Saints, it cannot be said that the meaning is the same in both cases. If you kneel before the Holy Sacrament and then before the body of a Saint, you adore God in the first case, while, in the latter, you do nothing else but venerate a Saint and implore his intercession. Will Protestants ever be unwilling or unable to make that distinction however so simple?

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Not 'y does the devotion that we have for the Saints not detract from the honor due to God alone, it is rather, on the contrary, an evident glorification of God Himself. Indeed, by proclaiming that the Saints have received of Jesus-Christ all the virtues which are the legitimate objects of our admiration, we honor all at once the infinite mercy of God, the inexhaustible treasures of His grace, in its fountain-head and first cause. Always admirable is the divine goodness, either considered in God Himself and His attributes, or observed in its outward manifestations.—When a king forbids his subjects to usurp the royal dignity, he does not forbid them to honor and respect the magistrates appointed by himself. So with God. He ordains that the adoration properly so-called be rendered only to His infinite Majesty; but He does not forbid us to honor the greatest of His servants and to implore their powerful intercession with Himself.

Now THE WORSHIP OF THE RELICS of the Saints is but a sequel of the above doctrine.

Luther, leaving the Church, had lost all feelings of shame and natural honesty: no wonder that he boasted not caring more for the bones of a Saint than for the bones of a hangman. The furious Calvin did see nought but an idolatrous practice in the veneration of relics. Those

nonsensical declamations have been transmitted from generation to generation, down to our time, in all Protestant sects, apart from the Anglicans who, by their doctrine and liturgy, incline towards the Catholic Church.

The worship of relics is rational and well grounded; nothing is easier than the demonstration of this fact. During its life, the body is united to the soul, to that immaterial substance which animates it, gives it life, and reveals as it were, even upon this visible envelope, a reflection of God's likeness; it is the ever assiduous companion of the labors, pains and joys of the soul; it is the instrument of its deeds. Death, it is true, shatters this frail edifice, and destroys the ties of union between these two substances. But the bones of the body are yet the property of the soul which has ennobled them by its own presence and activity. Later on, they shall be joined again to the soul which formerly imparted to them its own dignity; they shall be vested with glory and immortality. The more that soul was distinguished by true nobleness, by the supernatural grandeur which begets Saints, proceeds from the intimate union with God and is founded upon all Christian virtues, the more also the remains of the body which it animated shall be worthy of honor and veneration

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"What we honor in the relics of the Saints is not human, but divine deeds: deeds of faith, deeds to which the divine grace has imparted a character of holiness and divinity. This supernatural character outlives the works of the Saints, is transmitted to their relics, engraved and imprinted thereon. Hence it happens occasionally that miracles spring up from the fertile dust. At the mere contact of the remnants of a body sanctified by grace, our strength is reanimated, our infirmities vanish, health comes back into our body, peace and calm into our soul. If God does so endow the relics of the Saints with marvelous virtue; if He so glorifies after their demise those who have glorified Him during their life, is it so great a wonder? Has not sanctifying grace imparted to those members a supernatural and divine character? Has not the holy humanity of the Word of God penetrated into that body under the mysterious veils of the Blessed Sacrament? Has not the Spirit of God, that Spirit of power and fecundity, infused in those members a divine sap, a celestial vigour? Have not those members been the living members, the glorious members of the Son of God? Therefore it is quite natural, quite logical that the bodies of the saints draw their virtue and efficacy from what made their excellence and great-

ness, and that after having participated in God's life and perfection, they also participate in His power and fecundity." (MGR. FREPPEL. *Sermon on the relics of the Saints*).

This veneration of which the relics are the objects, is not more opposed to the law of God than the worship of the Saints in general. Let us search the Scripture. We read therein that Moses carries with respect the bones of the patriarch Joseph (Ex. XIII, 19); that Eliseus takes up gratefully the mantle of Elias (IV Kings, II, 13); that the body of a dead man is raised to life by the mere touch of the bones of the prophet Eliseus (IV Kings XIII, 21); etc. In the New Testament we read that the hem of the garment of the Lord became for the woman with a bloody flow the instrument of her cure (Matth. IX, 20-22); that even the shadow of Saint Peter healed the sick (Acts V, 15); that even the handkerchiefs and aprons of the Apostle Saint Paul drove away diseases and wicked spirits (Acts XIX, 12), etc. Do you not find in all such examples a brilliant confirmation of the actual doctrine and practice of the Church concerning the relics of the Saints ?

The early Christians did no more than that. They looked on the bones of the martyrs, of the confessors of the faith, as treasures more precious than gold and jewels; they laid them in rich

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caskets; they soaked linens in their blood; they venerated them as members of Christ, as temples of the Holy Ghost; they gathered them together carefully, and marked them with special signs to discern them from common bones; they held their religious meetings in their burial-places; they put some of them under the altars upon which was to be celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. This profound veneration of the primeval Church for the relics of the Saints is moreover demonstrated by numberless testimonies from tradition, all of them as bright as the light of the sun. Let us read the Acts of the martyrdom of Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna; of Saint Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch; the admirable writings of Saint Cyprian, of Tertullian, of Saint Basil, of Saint Ambrose, of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, of a great many others; and such reading will result in a perfect conviction that the Catholics, in this matter, have faithfully kept both the Bible and Tradition, and that the Protestants, again, have innovated.

Furthermore, why could not the Church do for the heroes of religion and virtue what the world does for its great men? Do we not keep carefully the sword of a conqueror, the pen of an illustrious writer, the tomb of a powerful monarch, everything that recalls to our mind the remem-

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brance of a father, of a mother, of a benefactor ? It is just in the same spirit that the Church honors the relics of the Saints: a spirit of devotion to the faith which the Saints have confessed by the shedding of their blood, or illustrated by their virtues; a spirit of love for our Lord, who by His grace, has hallowed them and led them to the glory of heaven.

Is it not known, as a shame to virtue, that Protestants, so fanatical against the worship of the relics of Saints, have transferred their veneration to the tankards of Luther, to his bible, to his watch, to his chair, to his nuptial bed of which any fragment was reputed a cure for toothache ? Have they not likewise venerated the pulpit of Wiclef, his desk, his mantle ? We, Catholics, unhesitatingly declare that we prefer to such unhallowed relics those of our Saints and martyrs whose virtues in the world have shown as the sun in the heavens.

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## SECOND CHAPTER

### The worship of the Most Blessed Virgin

#### SUMMARY

Nature of original sin.—The Immaculate Conception of Mary not a recent invention of the Catholic Church.—This dogma implicitly contained in the Bible, in Tradition, in the ancient Liturgies.—The perpetual virginity of Mary demonstrated by Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers.—Objections of heretics refuted.—Divine Motherhood of Mary.—Objections and answers thereto.

“Why, argue Protestants, do you worship the Blessed Virgin ? Is she not a common woman ?”

To answer that question properly, we must understand that Mary, on account of the eminent virtues of which God adorned her soul, of the privileges she was endowed with, and of her unrivalled dignity of Mother of God, is entitled to a special worship, namely that of *hyperdulia*, more elevated, more noble and more perfect than that accorded to the Saints. The *Divine Maternity* is the real foundation of the worship devoted to Mary in the Catholic Church. The *Immaculate Conception* and the *perpetual virginity* were as the means by which God has prepared an all hallowed and all pure Mother to His Son.

I. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY

God created the first man in the *state of innocence*, or *original justice*. In that state of holiness and happiness, man did know neither painful labor, nor suffering, nor sickness : he was not even liable to die. His soul was enriched with all *natural gifts* : a perfect intelligence, a will inclined to goodness, a heart spontaneously clinging to God and ignoring the woful enticements of lust; and God, in His infinite bounty, had superadded the *supernatural gifts* of His grace, as a principle of holiness and charity and of glory for Himself.

God placed man in the earthly paradise and forbade him to eat of a certain fruit. Man succumbed to the temptation of the serpent. The punishment came swiftly.

This fall was deadly both to his body and to his soul. To his body : for God condemned him to sufferings and to death. To his soul : for henceforth he was subject to ignorance, to error, to corruption, to weakness of free will, to rebellion of the senses against reason, and of reason against God. A deadly fall not only for himself, but for his whole posterity. The fault has corrupted not only his person, but also his nature; and this vitiated nature shall be the fountain-head of all

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his race. Created for grace, and now bereft of grace, man is afflicted with spiritual death : this death of the soul is the essence of original sin, a sin inherent to human nature vitiated in Adam, a sin special to every man and as universal as corporal death which is one of its dire consequences.

The Apostle Saint Paul teaches us that original stain reaches all men, that this dreadful heritage, this vitiated nature, is transmitted from our first parents to all reasonable creatures on earth. A single one, however, there is, who forms an exception, and whom God has guarded, by a most special privilege, from the universal malediction : that single creature is Mary, the august Mother of God. She alone, as the lily among thorns, has ever been clothed with a dazzling purity and has never borne on her forehead the original stain.

**First Objection.**—"This dogma of the Catholics is but a recent invention. Is it not a new-fangled dogma created by Pius IX in 1854 ?"

**ANSWER.**—Never has the Church created any dogma, and she shall never create any. She does not invent her doctrines : she does only ascertain the existence thereof and keep them undefiled. She has been intrusted by Jesus-Christ with the keeping of the deposit of Revelation, entirely contained in both the Bible and Tradition. She can neither add anything to it nor take anything

from it. By virtue of the infallible authority with which Jesus-Christ has vested her, she explains, whenever a need is felt for it, the doctrine divinely revealed, nothing more. When the Council of Nice, held in 324, condemned the fallacies of Arius who denied the divinity of Jesus-Christ, no new dogma was imposed to the faith of Catholics. The Council did nothing else but confirm the ancient creed. What the Holy Church had always believed was merely taught and defined in a more explicit manner. So has it been with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, which was more explicitly taught and defined by Pope Pius IX, and then has become a dogma of our faith.

Previous to its definition, it was left to the free discussion of theologians. Most of them defended with genius and perfect exactness of terms that doctrine of the Immaculate Conception; a few were against it. Little by little, the light broke forth: the Bible and Tradition were better understood by all; and the dogma became official and universal in the Church.

Let us examine briefly the foundations upon which rests that belief. God, forecasting the fall of man and his miseries resulting therefrom, resolves to create a world of grace and redemption in the midst of that world of sin and suffering.

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The incarnate Word shall be the new Adam thereof. He shall have a Mother, and this Mother will be Mary. Thus, before all ages, Mary is chosen by God as the new Eve, the Eve of that redeemed and renewed world. Therefore, in the terrestrial paradise, God already says : "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head; and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Gen. III, 15). All aver that these words concern the Messias and His Holy Mother. Obviously, God has not permitted that Mary be, even at the heel, bitten by the serpent, and that she be, even a moment, under the domination of the devil. If sin had, howsoever little, invaded her soul, how could be realised that perpetual enmity between herself and the serpent, as well as that glorious triumph she was bound to achieve over her foe, by crushing his head? Such has ever been the doctrine of all the Fathers of the Church.

Besides, how could God have consented to inhabit a temple primarily sullied by Satan, and to take His holy humanity from a flesh already tainted by sin? That is supremely repugnant to the infinite sanctity of God; and therefore it is obvious that the Mother of God was bound to be preserved from all corruption, even the corruption of the original stain.

After four thousand years of waiting, the Messias, predicted and foreshadowed in all the Old Testament, is going to appear. Let us hear the evangelical relation : "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her : Hail full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. And when she had heard, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this could, be. And the Angel said to her . Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God : behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give into Him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the Angel : How shall this be done, because I know not man ? And the Angel answering said to her : The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called

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the Son of God; and behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said : Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to thy word. And the Angel departed from her." (Luke I, 26-38).

Most extraordinary is that salutation. It comes from God; it is brought down by an Archangel, a heavenly messenger; there is not one like it in the whole Scripture. Not a single creature, before, had been called *full of grace*; not a single one ever received a message so honorable and so glorious. *Full of grace!* Thereby is enunciated the single privilege in virtue of which Mary had been prepossessed by grace, established in grace, overfilled with grace, contrariwise to the other children of Adam who are all generated in sin. Such is the meaning of that special salutation and benediction discerning Mary from all other women.

This Catholic belief, grounded on the Holy Scriptures, has altered into the domain of tradition, and become more and more explicit. The most ancient Fathers and the most eminent Doctors of the Church, in all times, teach us that Mary has ever been *pure as an unspotted lily, purer than the Seraphs and the Cherubim and all the hosts of*

*the celestial army, more holy than all other creatures, always immaculate, always free from all sins, from all taints, even the original one.*

Such expressions constantly recur in their writings either when they comment on the divine oracles of Genesis, or when they explain the angelical salutation, or when they speak in general of the holiness and glory of Mary. They expressly proclaim her *alone without spot, alone never separated from God, alone an immaculate daughter of God, alone a virgin whom the rust of sin has never corrupted.* They put her on a par with the thornless rose issued from a prickly stem.

The most ancient Liturgies, the Religious Orders, the most celebrated Universities of Europe hold the same doctrine. Of course it was not yet a dogma of our faith; but it was a universal belief.

**SECOND OBJECTION.**—“Saint Paul teaches that all have *sinned in Adam*, that Jesus-Christ has redeemed *all men* and delivered them from sin.”

**ANSWER.**—The Blessed Virgin was pure and immaculate in her Conception, not by nature, but by a special privilege; and this privilege, she owes it to the merits of Jesus-Christ, her divine Son, our Redeemer. The Redemption and the death of the Lord have been, for mankind, a remedy

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against sin committed; while for the Holy Virgin, they have been a preservative against original sin and spiritual death.

### II. PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF MARY.

The Evangelists make it clear that Mary has not begotten Jesus in the natural manner by a human operation, but in a supernatural manner, by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

The Angel, explaining to Mary how she would be in the same time a virgin and a mother, says expressly : "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." (Luke I, 35). Saint Matthew says likewise, about the birth of Jesus : "Mary, His mother was espoused to Joseph; before they came together, she was found with child, of the Hol. Ghost." (Matt. I, 18). And when Saint Joseph thought of putting away privately that noble virgin, an Angel appeared to him and quieted him by these words : "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Now, all this was done that the word might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet

saying : "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us." (Matth. I, 20-23).

Mary is awe-struck, hearing the celestial messenger, in the lonely house of Nazareth, speaking to her of a divine maternity. She remembers her vow of consecration to God, so as to have no intercourse with a mortal man. She feels bewildered and would rather give up that dignity of Mother of God, if it be inconsistent with the lustre of her inviolable virginity. But the Angel hastens to quiet her, saying that she shall conceive in a supernatural manner, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in other words that she shall become a mother without losing her virginity. He confirms what he says by the example of a miracle not greater than this one, but of the same kind : the miracle of Saint Elizabeth who heretofore barren, had conceived in her womb the Precursor of Jesus : and finally he appeals to the allmightyess of God with whom nothing is impossible. (Luke I, 34-37).

Therefore, by the Holy Scripture it is fully demonstrated that Mary remained a virgin, not only when she conceived a child in her chaste womb, but even when she gave birth to him.

If we turn to the tradition of the first ages of the Church, it is quite easy to be satisfied that the faithful have always believed in the perpetual virginity of Mary. Hence the appellations of *Virgin Mother*, of *ever Virgin*, etc., which are to be found in the old symbols of faith as well as in the writings of the Holy Fathers who refuted the heretics of their time. Thus they tell us that it was not less within the power of God to render fruitful Mary's virginity than it was in the power of Jesus-Christ to keep Saint Peter walking on the waves, to rise from the sepulchre without moving the stone at the entrance and to come into houses, the doors being shut. (John XX, 19). They liken this prodigy to the phenomenon of the eye which perceives, without being injured, the rays of the sun and conceives an image in itself.

**FIRST OBJECTION.**—“Jesus was presented to the temple by His Mother who submitted herself to the law of purification. This proceeding, according to the Mosaic law, is a proof that Mary was no longer a virgin.”

**ANSWER.**—Jesus and Mary have constantly submitted themselves to the law of Moses, though they were not obliged to do so. They only intended to give us examples of obedience. Jesus, to teach us humility, has undergone the

law of circumcision, though he was not subject to it.

SECOND OBJECTION.—“Saint Matthew says that Joseph knew her (Mary) not till she brought forth her first-born son.” (Matth. I, 25). That betokens that he knew her afterwards.”

ANSWER.—The particles *till*, *before*, in the Holy Scriptures, are but negative expressions as to what did not take place : they are mute as to the future, not implying at all that a thing not done in the past has occurred eventually. Therefore, the Evangelist does not mean that Mary had any intercourse with Joseph after the birth of Jesus. He only intends to tell us that the Saviour was conceived in a supernatural manner, without any participation of Joseph. And we infer from this fact and from the sanctity of both Joseph and Mary that they were always continent, after as well as before the birth of Jesus. So high a dignity made imperative a sanctity of such high degree.

In like manner, the expression *first-born* applied to Jesus does not mean that any other children came after Him of Mary; it is a mere statement that no other child had been born before Him to Mary. The *first-born* is the child before which no other child has been born of the same mother. This appellation does not imply at all

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that other children were born eventually. That is self-evident by the law of Moses, according to which all first-born were consecrated to the Lord, and offered to the priests. The objection, therefore, falls to the ground. As this is no proof and as there is absolutely no proof anywhere else that other children were subsequently born to Mary, the conclusion forces itself that Jesus is an only-born child, born supernaturally, and that Mary was ever a virgin.

**THIRD OBJECTION.**—“In several places, the Gospel speaks of the *brethren* of Jesus : therefore Mary had other children beside Jesus.”

**ANSWER.**—It is a well known fact that the Holy Scripture calls *brethren* all the relatives of a man. So it is that Abraham called Lot his *brother*, though Lot was only his *nephew*. Laban also is called Abraham’s *brother*, though Laban was only his *grand-nephew*. According to this custom, the nephews and other relatives of Mary, even those of Joseph who was looked upon as the father of Christ, are duly called *brethren* of Jesus. Another example is that of Raguel who calls Tobias his *brother*, though he was but his *cousin*.<sup>(1)</sup> Moreover, if real brothers of Jesus were in the house of Mary, it should have been

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(1) Gen. XII, 8; Ib. XIX, 15; Tob. VII, 4.

imperative for them to take care of their mother after Crucifixion; and then we could not account at all for the act of Jesus intrusting His Mother to Saint John; for the brothers, indeed, would not have been unfaithful to their duty in this respect.

FOURTH OBJECTION.—“Joseph is called spouse of Mary and Mary is called spouse of Joseph : is it not a proof that Mary was not a virgin ?”

ANSWER.—The Church has always believed that a true marriage had taken place between Mary and Joseph; but you must bear in mind that a marriage can be real and valid without being consummated. The essential conditions to a genuine mariage do not include consummation. Besides, it is beyond doubt that the Holy Fathers were at least as well versed in the Holy Scripture as can be our modern Protestants; and for all that they never thought of doing away with the dogma of the virginity of Mary, under the false pretext of any impossibility of nature or of opposition to the Scriptures.

### III. DIVINE MATERNITY OF MARY

Mary is not, as held by certain Protestants, an ordinary woman: she is the Mother of Jesus-Christ, a true God; consequently she is the Mother

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of God. Of course, she has not begotten the divine nature, but she has given birth to the Incarnate Word who is God and man all together.

In fact, the Angel of the Lord says expressly to Mary : "The *Holy* which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God*. (Luke I, 35). It is manifest that Mary, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, has become the Mother of the only begotten Son of God, though her virginity never ended or grew less.

Protestantism entertains the utmost respect for the memory of Luther, of Calvin, of Elizabeth, and other such personages whose life, far from being a summary of Christian virtues, was but a slough of vices and unseemly aberrations. How then can they find fault with the Catholics venerating that woman whom the Holy Scriptures call *full of grace, blessed among all women, overfilled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost*, at the same time *a Virgin and the Mother of God, whom all generations proclaim Blessed*, in whom the *Almighty has achieved great things*? The Catholics do nothing else but to love, honor and venerate Her whom Jesus, our divine model, has Himself loved, honored and venerated.

OBJECTION.—"In two circumstances, Our Lord has called Mary *woman* : this word is a warning

that we must not make so much of Mary; for she was a mother according to the flesh."

ANSWER.—This word, *woman*, with the Hebrews, had not the same meaning that it has in French (or in modern languages). The Greeks and the Romans, speaking to queens and high ladies gave them that title. Eve, still graced with virginity and original integrity, is called by that name in the Holy Scripture. (Gen. II, 22; III, 1-2). No wonder that Jesus-Christ upon the cross, recommending His Mother to His beloved disciple, used the same expression. All righteous minds will easily understand that Jesus, infinite kindness itself, could not, in so painful a situation, use any offending or scornful expression which might have aggravated His Mother's sorrow. Besides, it must be noticed that the first time Jesus called His Mother *woman*, at the nuptials of Cana, He immediately wrought a miracle of the first order, at her prayer and in her behalf, to show that He cannot refuse anything to His dear Mother.

All Protestant objections fall to the ground if one heeds the following principles of the Catholic Church : 1° Jesus-Christ is by nature the only essential Mediator; Mary is powerful in heaven only on account of her divine Son's infinite merits and Precious Blood; 2° We adore God

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alone; we only venerate Mary whose greatness is from God; 3° we beg God alone to grant us favors and graces; we only beg Mary to add her prayers to ours that we may be heard of God; 4° the temples, statues, images in honor of Mary extol the gifts of God in Mary, they do not mean that Mary is great by herself.

Therefore, the worship of *hyperdulia* rendered to Mary does not savor at all of idolatry or superstition, and does not derogate from the supreme worship due to God alone. Luther, Calvin, Beza and other Protestant reformers have acknowledged the sublime privileges of Mary. The *Book of Common Prayer* of the Anglicans contains a great part of the Catholic liturgy concerning the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, specially the solemnities of the Annunciation and Purification.

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## THIRD CHAPTER

### The worship of images

#### SUMMARY

True doctrine of the Catholic Church with regard to the worship of images.—Objection from Exodus, XX, 4; answer to the same.—Practice of fabrication and veneration of images traced back to the origin of Christianity. — Objection against pilgrimages; answer thereto.

Protestantism has repeatedly misrepresented the Catholic doctrine with regard to the worship of images, pretending that the Catholics adore them, an assertion altogether false.

The doctrine of the Holy Council of Trent, on this point, is most explicit. It runs thus : “It is good to have and to keep, above all in churches, the images of Jesus-Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, of other Saints, and render to them a suitable veneration, *not as though there be in them any virtue or dignity worthy of honor: not as though we might put faith in them, as did the heathens who trusted in idols; but for this reason that the honor given to them has reference to the types represented; so that, kissing the images, uncovering our heads and kneeling before*

*them, we adore Jesus-Christ and venerate the Saints of whom they show the likeness."*

This worship, therefore, is *relative*, not absolute. We do not venerate the material image : we honor the heavenly personage whom it represents. Catholics, in this, do exactly as a Protestant who preserves an affection for a deceased father, for an illustrious friend, hangs their portraits in a fine place, kisses them, looks at them with tenderness, even adorns them with wreaths of flowers on their feast days. No body is stupid enough to see in this tribute of love and respect an act of idolatry. Every one understands that the object thereof is not the picture, but the dear beings represented by the picture. Such is the case of the Catholics who bow or kneel before a statue of the Saviour, of the Blessed Virgin, of any Saint. This act of veneration, together with the accompanying prayer, is not intended for the marble, the wood, the canvass, etc., but for the personage represented. That is a most comprehensible proceeding. And you see thereby how wrongfully the Protestants reproach us with idolatry and superstition.

**FIRST OBJECTION.**—“The Catholics violate that precept of the Decalogue forbidding images to the Jewish people : “Thou shalt not have strange gods before me; thou shalt not make to thyself

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a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or of those things that are in the waters; I am the Lord thy God."(1)

ANSWER.—It is obvious that the purpose of that precept was to turn away the Jewish people from the adoration of idols. The tragedy of the golden calf shows that they were very prone to idolatry, and the more so because they were surrounded by nations adoring the stars and animals of all kinds. That is the reason why God forbids the Jews to have other gods but Himself, and to make for themselves images of strange gods with the purpose of rendering them a supreme worship, of asking favors of them, of trusting them; because He alone is the true God. Therefore the only thing forbidden to the Jews is the fabrication of idols, and adoration of such as gods. But the Catholics have never believed that the images of our churches were gods and they never adored them. God's prohibition such as given to the Jews does therefore not apply to Catholics.

Furthermore, that prohibition, evidently, was not absolute. In fact, we read that God Himself, immediately after, bids Moses to make two

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(1) Ex. XX, 3, 4.

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cherubs of beaten gold and to place them on the two sides of the proptitory. (Ex. XXV, 18). Solomon had similar angels engraved on the walls of the temple of God. The Lord said to Moses : "Make a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign : whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live. (Num. XXI, 8). This healing virtue came from the fact that the brazen serpent represented Jesus-Christ who was to be exalted on the cross. If, without being guilty of idolatry, Moses and the Jews have erected and venerated that brazen serpent which figured the Saviour's crucifixion, why should the Catholics be guilty of such a crime, by putting in their churches images reminding them of the birth, of the life, of the death of the same Jesus ? Adoration of images : that is the only thing that was forbidden by the spirit of the law of Moses, according to the interpretation given to it by the leaders of the people.

You must not fancy that the practice of making and honoring images is of modern origin. To be convinced of that fact, you have but to go down into the Roman catacombs, where our fathers in the faith assembled for prayer and for preparation to martyrdom. There you find, in great number, paintings representing Jesus on the cross, the Blessed Virgin, a great many Saints, and most of the biblical personages.

Then, in the primitive Church, the same faith and the same practices as those of to-day prevailed. That is as clear as the noonday sun.

**SECOND OBJECTION.**—“Catholics show a greater veneration for certain images than for others; that is a proof that they ascribe an essential worth, an inherent virtue to images; in other words, that is a proof of idolatry.”

**ANSWER.**—There is not the least bit of idolatry in this practice of the faithful. Indeed, their veneration, sometimes, discriminates between images and images; but such a preference is due to accidental causes, not to the persuasion that a divine virtue is inherent in any of them. By special designs of His Providence, God, of course, can make any particular image a more abundant channel of His marvellous graces, a more powerful organ of His infinite mercy. It is by such a dispensation of God Himself, as we read in Scripture, that miracles took place through the hands of Saint Paul, through handkerchiefs and other linen applied to the body of that illustrious Apostle of the Gentiles. But never has a Catholic believed that miraculous images or statues are endowed *of themselves* with any effective power of healing the sick or performing any kind of miracles. It is only a question of power in God, to wit :

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what image or statue God will be pleased to choose as a more powerful instrument of His own action. The greatest men, the Saints of all ages have interpreted in this wise the worship of images and statues apparently more powerful than others; and it is just that their sentiment be preferred to the quibbles of all skeptics, rationalists and free-thinkers of the present time.

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A few words about pilgrimages will not be amiss, as a simple corollary. "What is the use of pilgrimages, inquire the Protestants ? God is not more accessible in one place than in another."

Holy Scripture answers that objection. We read in Genesis (XLVI, 1), that "Israël, with all that he had, came to the Well of the Oath, and killed victims there to the God of his father Isaac, etc." And the Lord rewarded the piety of His servant with a celestial vision, as He had formerly done to Isaac in this same place of the Well of the Oath. This was a true place of pilgrimage.

After ordering the Israëlitæ to destroy idolatry in the country of Chanaan, God says to them : "You shall come to the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put

His name there, and to dwell in it; and you shall offer in that place your holocausts and victims." (Deut. XII, 5-6).

Later on, making the dedication of the temple, Solomon addresses a magnificent prayer to the Lord, "that He may open his eyes upon this house, day and night, upon the place where-in He has promised that His name should be called upon; and that He would hear the prayer of His servant and of His people Israël." (II Paral. VI, 20-21).

See again Naaman, the Assyrian, who, being cured by bathing seven times in the waters of the Jordan, asks of Eliseus that he be allowed to take from hence the burden of two mules of earth, in order to offer to God sacrifices upon this earth, being determined, henceforward, not to offer such to other gods but the Lord. (IV Kings, V. 17).

When the ennuch of Ethiopia met the deacon Philip who explained to him the prophecy of Isaias, and baptized him, Philip was just coming back from a pilgrimage to the Holy City, wherein he had adored the Lord. (Acts. VIII, 26).

The fountain of Jerusalem called Probatica, was nothing else but a place of pilgrimage, as those of Loretto, of Lourdes, of Saint Anne de Beaupré are in our days. Under the five porches

which adorned this fountain, lay a host of sick people waiting for the moving of the water; and the waters being moved by an Angel of the Lord, he who went down first into the pool was cured. (John V, 2-4). But whence came to the water of that pool the power of healing the sick? Why did an Angel of the Lord descend from heaven to stir that water? Because such was the will and the kindness of God. He was pleased to use that water, as an instrument, for healing the sick and showing forth His power. And how should it be, now, more difficult to God to use the relics of a Saint or the water of Lourdes for the same purpose? Is God no longer free, as in olden times, to make the law of nature subservient to His purposes, in times, places, ways, most agreeable to Him? It would be absurd to deny this truth.

Once more, let it be said that we never invoke material objects, whatsoever they may be. All of our prayers are addressed to God to obtain graces; they are to the Saints only to implore their intercession with God, and their help for obtaining graces of God through the merits of our only Supreme Mediator and Saviour, Jesus-Christ Our Lord.

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## FOURTH CHAPTER

### A FEW PARTICULARITIES OF THE EXTERNAL WORSHIP IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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#### SUMMARY

Incense.—Lamps, lighted tapers.—Holy water.—Various ceremonies of the Church.—Pomp of solemnities.—Worship in spirit and in truth.

“INCENSE, clamor the Protestants, is a superstition which has survived the ruins of paganism.”

ANSWER.—Let us open the Bible. God bids Moses make *incense*, a special perfume to be burnt before the tabernacle ; He tells him the exact composition thereof in the least details ; and He forbids the use of that composition for common purposes. (Exod., XXX, 34-38).

The Mosaic Law prescribed that objects offered in sacrifice be strewn with fragrant gums. Likewise, in the temple of Jerusalem, the sacrifice of incense was offered daily, morn and night.

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The Apocalypse shows an Angel standing, with a golden censer in hand, before the altar, near the throne of God; and much incense was given him, and the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the Saints ascended up before God. (Apoc. VIII, 3-4).

Jesus is just born in the stable : behold the Wise men haste to come from the East, offering Him frankincense, as a tribute of adoration. (Matth. II, 11).—And the Gospel praises the sinful woman who, in the house of the Pharisee, broke an alabaster vase of ointment over the feet of the Lord, kissing them and wiping them with the hairs of her head. (Luke VII, 38).

The practice of burning incense, as a token of respect, is as ancient as the Christian Church; it is even grounded on the Bible. The oldest liturgies of the East mention the incensings which took place during the Holy Sacrifice. Incense was not done away with until it was offered up to idols by the pagans.

Saint Ambrose, commenting on the first chapter of Saint Luke, said : "Would to God that an Angel assist us likewise, when we incense the altar during the Holy Sacrifice!"

In the Catholic Church, incense is burnt to the Holy Sacrament as an act of adoration towards the Saviour hidden under the sacramental species.

It is also burnt to the relics of the altar and to the Gospel Book, as an act of veneration towards the Saints and the word of God. The other incensings made over blessed objects, over the bread and wine of the Holy Sacrifice, are symbolic figures of the grace which hallows those objects and forbids them to be used for profane purposes. The incensing of the officiating priest, and of the faithful attending, means that their prayers must ascend to heaven, as a sweet-smelling incense agreeable to the Lord. (Ps. CXL, 2).

Nobody, with a little common sense, will discover any scrap of idolatry in this magnificent symbolism.

LAMPS, LIGHTED TAPERS in broad day-light :  
"Why this lavishness of lights ?"

ANSWER.—There is nothing contrary to the Bible in this practice, since we read in Leviticus (XXIV, 2-4), that seven lamps fed with olive oil and set on a golden candlestick, were kept constantly burning in the presence of the Lord.

If, in the New Law, we find no prescription, we likewise find no prohibition, about the use of lights. We find, however, in the Acts of the Apostles (XX, 8), that "there were a great number of lamps in the upper chamber" in Troas, wherein Saint Paul preached the word of God.

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The history of the persecutions, in the first centuries of the Church, relates that the Christians were obliged to take shelter and meet in the Catacombs to pray and hear Mass, and that therein they put lighted lamps and tapers to illuminate the sombre halls. These lights were not only designed to dispel the material darkness: they were above all a sign of joy, a figure of the Lord, the Light of the world, present in His Church, a symbol of divine love, that sacred fire which Jesus came down to kindle, here below, in our hearts.

The Church has always kept up that old custom which reminds us of the bygone days when our ancestors suffered for the faith, as well as of the luminous teachings of the Saviour, and the love which is due to so good a God by the faithful. 'In the East, says Saint Jerome, tapers are lighted in full day, not to dispel darkness, as there is none, but to express a real joy, and represent, by that sensible light, the internal illumination spoken of by the Psalmist saying: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths." (Ps. CXVIII, 105).

That custom prevails yet in our days. Our religious solemnities are most brilliantly enhanced by the illumination of the temples, of the altars, of the relics and images of the Saints. Why

then should any blame be attached to a custom sanctioned by the Bible, extant at the time of the Apostles and of their immediate successors and maintained in the whole world until the present day ? What is done in the civil society, to acclaim a king or a victorious general ? How are his valorous deeds exalted ? How is joy manifested ? Everybody is astir to illuminate the city, the streets, the buildings, and to dominate the darkness of night by the glow of thousands of lights. So does the Church when she wants to show forth her joy and to honor either Her divine Founder or the Saints who have trodden in His footsteps.

A few Protestant sects have restored the use of lights, even of incense in their churches; and a great many churches, from the summit of their spires, bear up the cross which had been torn down by the famous Reformers.

HOLY WATER : "What is that old custom of sprinkling water in the church ?"

ANSWER.—Among all peoples, water used in religious ceremonies is the symbolic sign of the purity that is required to worship God in a suitable manner. In the Mosaic law, God had prescribed a great many purifications by means of water, as, for instance, when the priests entered

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the sanctuary or were about to offer incense on the altar.

The holy water, placed at the entrance of God's temple, reminds us that it is baptism which made us children of God and of the Church. It also warns us that we must purify our thoughts and affections, in order to be heard in our prayers. That is the meaning of the words chanted during the sprinkling of water : "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; thou shalt wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow. Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy," (Ps. L, 9-3). Nothing, therefore, can be found in this old custom, that is not in full agreement with the word of God, and perfectly consonant with the religious feelings of a true Christian soul.

THE CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH : "Are they not deviating greatly from the former simplicity of the primitive Church ?"

ANSWER.—Saint Paul (I Cor. XIV, 40) ordains that in the churches, everything be done decently and according to order". That prescription of the Apostles reveals the existence of fixed regulations for the cult. Our Lord Himself made use occasionally of certain ceremonies. See Him with the deaf-mute whom He intends to cure. Firstly, He separates him from the crowd ; then

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He puts His fingers into his ears, He touches his tongue with His own saliva, He looks up to heaven, He groans, and finally He says to him *Ephpheta*, that is : "Be opened." (Mark. VII, 32-35). Is not all that a series of ceremonies, such as those which are used in the administration of baptism in the Catholic Church ?

What does Jesus when He communicates to His Apostles the divine power of remitting sins ? He breathes on them and says: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John XX, 22-23). That ceremony, like all others, had a meaning. By that divine breath Jesus conferred to His Apostles the power of quickening souls and restoring to them the supernatural life of which sin has deprived them.

Jesus is about to cure the man born blind. He says to His disciples that He is the light of the world; He spits on the ground, He mixes clay with the spittle, He spreads the clay upon the eyes of the blind man, then He says to him : "Go and wash in the pool of Siloe." (John IX, 1-7). Will the Protestants find superstition in that ceremony used by the Lord ?

We, Catholics, for our part, believe that the Church, vested with a divine authority, can,

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after Jesus-Christ, use certain outward ceremonies touching our senses, indicating spiritual purposes, and revealing the internal graces that are imparted to fallen man. Water poured upon the head of the infant at baptism, is the clear figure of the grace cleansing the soul of the child from all taint of sin. And likewise, all other ceremonies, one after the other, show forth the grace which cures spiritual blindness or dullness, purifying the senses.

We believe, furthermore, that these various embellishments of the Catholic worship, united with an ardent spirit of religion and piety, help a great deal to enhance the respect, the veneration, the trust of the faithful towards holy things. Man is not a pure spirit. It is but through the external senses, through sensible objects, that he can arise to the knowledge and the love of spiritual, invisible things.

We believe finally that if Jacob, of himself, has done well to anoint with oil the stone upon which he had rested his head, and to set it up as a memorial of his grand vision, being thereby pleasing to God (Gen. XXVIII, 18); if, later on, the Synagogue, on the advice of Mardechai only, has done well to institute a new feast as a memorial of the deliverance of the Jews, the Catholic Church cannot do ill, and we see not the slightest reason

why she should do ill, to institute official feasts and ceremonies which she deems necessary to the majesty of worship. Doubtless, it is Jesus-Christ who instituted the Sacraments, it is He who has attached grace in sensible signs; but it cannot be denied that He abandoned to the wisdom of His Apostles and of His Church the determination of the accessories thereto.

The Protestants criticize our solemnities, sacred vestments, decorations in the Church. However they cannot help admiring them. The reason is that the harmony that reigns between the object we have in view and our ceremonies is quite noticeable. They are struck by the fact that, desirous of adoring suitably the infinite greatness of God in our temples, we deem that, for such a purpose, nothing can be too magnificent and too brilliant.

The Old Law was but a shadow, a figure of the New. Nevertheless, remember the gorgeousness of its worship. How rich were the vestments of the highpriest ! How magnificent the treasures accumulated in that temple of Jerusalem, uninhabited by God though it was ! How grand the feasts therein, attracting the whole nation ! If the Catholic Church has not allowed herself to be inferior to the Synagogue, has not done less for the reality than was done

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formerly for the figure, and has not striven less than the Jews to honor God, her divine spouse and the Saviour of the world, is it not foolish to blame her for that zeal ? And the remark has been made that those men who find too much luxury in the churches never find enough of it in theatres, in public halls, in their own dwellings. Very likely they put matter above soul, earth above heaven.

Of course, the Christians of the first centuries, hunted like wild beasts, compelled to take shelter in the catacombs, could not carry on with great display their religious festivities. But this forced penury was not their normal condition. As soon as Christian liberty began to shine upon the world and dispel the clouds of paganism, the faithful had it to heart to show forth in splendid solemnities their thankfulness and affection towards God. Under the impulse of the Church, the majesty of the worship attained great solemnity. It was like the puny seed put into the earth shooting forth, growing vigourously, becoming a giant tree.

By way of reprisal, let us ask of a few Protestant sects why they remain fasting to receive the communion, why they kneel before the Bishop when he confirms, why they use white surplices. Are they warranted by the Bible to

do so ? No, the Bible is silent as to that. They have kept those practices from the Catholic Church which they have deserted.

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH: "Is it not that kind of worship which Jesus-Christ requires of His adorers, according to John (IV, 24) ?"

ANSWER.—That is true : that is our doctrine : the interior worship is essential : it is even the basis of the exterior cult. This latter has no value in the sight of God, if it is not rooted in the heart, if it is not like the efflorescence of the true love of God. What Jesus-Christ highly dislikes and condemns is a great attachment to the external practices of worship, if in the same time the worshipper neglects the practice of virtues without which it is impossible to please God. Such was the worship of the Pharisees, all consisting in frequent ablutions and such external practices, while they concealed harshness, ambition, avarice, corruption of the heart, under the veil of hypocrisy.

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## FIFTH CHAPTER

### PURGATORY

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#### SUMMARY

The dogma of Purgatory proved by Holy Scripture.—By the Fathers of the Church.—By the Councils.—Practice of Anglicans.

According to the Catholic doctrine, Purgatory is a place of suffering wherein the just complete their purification, if they have not entirely atoned for their sins before dying.

OBJECTION.—“Purgatory is not mentioned in the Bible : it is an invention of the Roman Church taking advantage of the people’s credulity.”

ANSWER.—That Protestant utterance is altogether false. In fact, do we not read in the second book of Machabees (XII, 43), that Judas “making a gathering, sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead” ?—And is it not said, immediately after, (*ibidem*, 46), that “it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they be loosed from sins” ? These words of

the sacred text show forth evidently that sins are not always atoned for before death, that we are liable to die a pious and holy death without a full satisfaction given to the justice of God, and finally that we can atone thoroughly and be delivered in the other world. That is Purgatory.

Many Protestants claim that the two first books of Machabees are not canonical, not inspired of God. But what do they know about it, having not any authority to set up a canon of the Scriptures ? In fact, they won't have anything to do with tradition; but without the Catholic tradition, it is impossible to know whether a book is inspired or not. The declaration of the Catholic Church is even founded on tradition, before being warranted by her infallible authority. Besides, were it true that these two books are not canonical, they have none the less a great historical value. In this capacity they still bear out the belief of the Jewish people in the efficacy of prayer for the dead, consequently their belief in Purgatory.

Our Lord Himself has thus spoken : "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven

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him neither in this world, nor in the world to come." (Matth. XII, 32). The natural inference from these words is that there are sins which are remissible in the other life, and a place wherein they can be atoned for. According to the wise remark of Saint Augustine, the Saviour "could not have said that a certain sin is forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come, if there were not sins, in general, which, being not remitted in this life, can be remitted in the other."

Saint Gregory Nasianzen, moved by his great faith in Purgatory, wrote as follows : "The soul that breaks away from the bonds of the body cannot immediately be united to God : it must previously let the fire of purgatory wipe out the last remnants of the stains incurred by sin." How many other Fathers of the Church have spoken in the same strain !

History shows Saint Monica soliciting the prayers of the Church for her soul : Saint Jerome leading to the sepulchre the body of Saint Paula, and reciting prayers such as we do now; Saint Ephrem ordering, by his last dispositions, offerings and sacrifices; in brief, all Catholicity acclaiming in concert the dogma of an intermediate place between hell and heaven.

The Councils of Florence and of Lyons have taught, as a rule of faith, that if any true penitents

die in the love of God before having fully atoned for their sins of action and omission by worthy fruits of penance, their souls are purified, after death, in the pains of purgatory; and that the suffrages of the living faithful, that is : the sacrifice of Mass, prayers, alms, and other pious deeds, such as they are wont to offer for others according to the instructions of the Church, can avail to shorten the duration of those pains. The same doctrine is taught by the Council of Trent in its decree on Purgatory.

Luther, the Father of Protestantism, has made this avowal : "I believe, and I know perfectly that there is a purgatory." This truth is confirmed by the liturgies of the Latin and Greek Churches; it is found in the belief of all nations.

The dogma of Purgatory is demonstrated by reason itself, by common sense, as follows : 1° There are men who, when they die, are guilty of only slight faults, venial sins. Shall these men be cast down into hell ? No; because hell is the hatred of God, the prison wherein the great sinners shall be held for ever; and slight faults, venial sins, not destroying the love of God in hearts, do not make of any man a great sinner. Shall they be raised to heaven ? No, because heaven is the dwelling-place of a God whose holiness is infinite, and wherein nothing

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can enter. One place is left to them : the intermediate one, Purgatory. And indeed, if human justice admits degrees in the punishments inflicted by the judge, if it does not condemn to the capital penalty all the criminals, why should not divine justice, the fountain-head and the standard of all other justices, also admit attenuating circumstances, and why should it be bound to condemn all sinners to hell indiscriminately ?

2° Other men there are who, being converted at the hour of death, receive absolution, but have no time left to atone for their sins. Shall they be condemned to hell ? No, because their sins have been remitted to them. Shall they be immediately accepted into heaven ? No again, because they have sins to atone for and the idea of heaven, implying a perfect happiness, excludes the idea of expiation. Hence the necessity for them to go to an intermediate place wherein they find neither the joys of heaven, nor the torments of hell. Consequently reason itself proves the necessity of Purgatory.

Count de Maistre has said : "One of the great motives of the religious troubles of the sixteenth century was Purgatory. The dissenters wanted stubbornly nothing else but hell beside heaven. Later on, however, turning philosophers, they denied the eternity of pains, and then kept only

a *pro tempore* hell, for the sake of good police, and the fear that a Nero with a Messalina be said to go straight to heaven as well as a Saint Louis and a Saint Theresa. But a temporary hell is nothing but a purgatory; so that, after wrangling to do away with purgatory, they are now bickering to have nothing less than purgatory.”(1)

The belief that our prayers, our good deeds, and above all Masses are useful to the dead, comes from the Apostles. It is connected everywhere with the dogma of Purgatory. Saint John Chrysostom says : “It is not in vain that oblations, prayers, alms, are offered for the dead. The Holy Ghost has so ordained our mutual relations that we might relieve one another. It is possible that we obtain for the dead a full reconciliation, partly by our own prayers, partly by the merits of the saints whose names are pronounced with theirs at the altar.”—Saint Cyril of Jerusalem writes : “We pray for our fathers, our bishops, and generally for those who died in the faith ; for we believe that the holy and adorable Victim in the presence of whom we pray, grants abundant relief to the souls of the dead.”

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(1) *Soirées de St-Petersbourg*, viii<sup>e</sup> Entrée.

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It is useless to adduce more testimonies. They all uphold the same doctrine, the doctrine which the Holy Roman Catholic Church has ever held both theoretically and practically.

The Anglicans, on this point as in many others are quite near the Catholic Church. Among them, indeed, the practice of praying for the dead is more and more generalized, above all on the second day of November, All Souls' Day.

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## SIXTH CHAPTER

### INDULGENCES

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#### SUMMARY

Nature and ground of Indulgences.—Conditions required to gain them.—Tradition of the first centuries of the Church about Indulgences.—They are not an incentive to evil doing.—They are not sold.

Indulgences deliver man from the penalty due to his sins, not only before the Church, but also before God, as evidenced by these words of the Saviour to His Apostles : "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matth. XVIII, 18). The purport of these words is a boundless power for the deliverance of souls from all spiritual fetters holding them captives under the law of sin; they are not susceptible of any other limits than those which might be set either by divine right or by the nature of things. But the penalties incurred by sin are in reality spiritual fetters which hold the soul captive and prevent it from seeing God as long as it has not fully atoned for its sins. Our Lord,

therefore, all at once, has conferred on His Church not only the power of remitting sins, but also the power of remitting the penalties due to them.

By means of indulgences, the Church can deliver us either from the whole, or from a part only of those penalties due to sin. Hence two kinds of indulgences : plenary and partial. Let us here declare, that to gain indulgences, it is necessary to be in the state of grace and to perform exactly the acts prescribed either by the Pope or by the Bishop granting the favor. Let us also remark that indulgences do not remit sins : they remit only the penalties due to sins ; they take for granted the previous remission of both the sins and the eternal punishment ; consequently contrition is indispensable.

In the first ages of the Church, the pastors often granted relaxations of penalties to penitents in behalf of whom the martyrs had solicited an indulgence. Doubtless, they did not grant illusory favors of no value with God and giving a deceitful impression that no more penalties were due for sins committed. They felt sure that God would accept vicariously the sufferings of the martyrs for the satisfaction which the penitents themselves ought to have accomplished, or ought to accomplish. That is the origin, and the true foundation of indulgences. In all

times, God showed Himself willing to forgive the guilty for the sake of the innocent; regarding the merits of the ones to treat the others indulgently. This ordinance of God has not changed. In it the Church has found the reason of her discipline in this matter. She has always said to the faithful that it is from the treasure of the superabundant merits of our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin, of all the Saints, that she draws the satisfaction presented to God as atonement for our sins. She alone could do so, having alone received the power of the Keys; just as in all societies which have a common treasure, it is incumbent upon the supreme authority to dispose of its contents.

Count de Maistre justified indulgences by the statement that they are, in the religious order, but an application of a law which is universal in the world. "There is not, said he, even among the Protestants, a single father who has not forgiven a guilty child through *the intercession and the merits* of another child with whom he is better pleased. There is not a sovereign who has not remitted or commuted the penalties of a culprit *for the sake of* a father, a brother, a son, a relative, an ancestor of the guilty one. In both cases you have indulgences. And this principle is so natural and so general that it shows itself continually in the least exercise of human justice..."

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Our separated brethren have contested this principle of ours, as though the Redemption which they worship as we do, were not an immense indulgence granted to mankind through the merits of an innocent God voluntarily immolated for us." (1)

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Is it true that, with Catholics, "indulgences are sold", according to the saying of Protestants ?

This aspersion, as any other slander against the Catholic belief, proceeds either from ignorance or from bad faith. Indulgences, being spiritual boons or divine graces, can neither be bought nor be sold, as there is no standard value between spiritual riches and material currency as gold and silver. Never are indulgences granted for merely temporal considerations. They must relate to things spiritual though accidentally a temporal consideration, as a subsidiary condition, alms for instance, may be included.

Is it true that indulgences are but "an incitement to crime, a permission granted beforehand to sin again ?"

That is an infamous calumny. In fact, indulgences cannot be gained by those who are in the state

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(1) *Soirées de St-Pétersbourg, Xe Entretien.*

of mortal sin. They always imply the state of grace, consequently sincere contrition and forgiveness of sins committed. The remission of the penalty cannot take place previously to the remission of the fault. Besides, never does the Church dispense altogether either from personal expiation or from satisfaction which are both essential parts of the Sacrament of Penance. In spite of all indulgences, thieves are always bound to make restitution, and detractors to make reparation. And a good work, as a necessary condition, is always required to gain an indulgence. In this respect, indulgences are most beneficial, in the moral and social, as well as the religious order.

### CONCLUSION

The author of this little *Catechism of religious Controversy* is satisfied that he has sufficiently refuted the chief objections of Protestants against the Catholic doctrine. He has made it clear that all of these objections arise either from ignorance or from a false interpretation of the teachings of the Church. This is the reason why the most learned men of Anglicanism, a Newman, a Manning, a Faber, who have seriously conversed with the Holy Scripture, the Councils, the Fathers

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and the Doctors of the Church, have felt obliged by their conscience to break off their allegiance to the Church of England and to embrace the Catholic faith. Righteous minds, looking out for light, for religious truth above all, they have not haggled about the sacrifices incumbent upon their coming back to the true fold of Jesus-Christ. Would to God that all the dissenting readers of this booklet, following such noble examples, and answering the call of the divine Saviour, finally form with us but one flock, under the staff of one pastor : the Sovereign Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus-Christ upon earth !

THE END.

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